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INDIVIDUAL WORTH BY DIVINE ESTIMATE

“Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it” (Jeremiah 5:1).

The thinking of this materialistic generation has been crystalized into patterns of material possessions and temporal things; so much that a man's worth is measured by his financial holdings and the number of figures in his bank account.

As civilization advances and knowledge increases, the prevailing concept of life's higher and finer qualities become further removed from what the Bible discloses them to be. The minimizing of the individual's worth over against the importance of the masses is a sure sign of moral decay.

In viewing the great pageant of human history, it is so often the momentous action of the crowd that dazzles the eye. From that far-off day when armies first learned to go forth to war, men have been prone to feel that victory was on the side of the largest armies; but the case of Gideon's immortal three hundred, Deborah's ragamuffin band, and a score of other “magnificent minorities” have proven otherwise.

The history of Divine Revelation is the history of God's efforts to underscore the value of a life,

and to bring the importance of the individual into proper focus.

Symbolic of this overtone of truth is Samson's slaying the one thousand Philistines, and David's destroying the Giant with one small stone.

In their march of destiny across desert wastes and hostile lands, Israel was a match for her adversaries. Lest she should make the mistake of trusting in numbers, Moses lifted up his voice to sing, "one of you shall chase a thousand . . . two, ten thousand."

I think it safe to say that God does not look upon us as a nation, as a race of people, as a mass of humanity; but God looks upon us and deals with us as individuals.

When your life is brought into divine focus, you cease to be just an entity in the masses of men. You become as individualistic as one star in the midnight sky.

Although the masses have exerted their combined strength to turn the course of History for the progress of civilization, wherever and whenever anything worthwhile has been done, the individual has emerged to do it. Life itself exists for the sake of the individual.

History records uncounted incidents of the vain expenditures of physical forces when the masses have moved without regard and respect for individual life.

The pyramid, The Great, from the historic land of the Nile stands in somber silence on a wind-swept desert. A worthless relic out of the dim distant past, built as a tomb for Cheops, it never served its fanatical purpose for long. But it became the burying place for unnamed thousands of human slaves. Twenty years it took to build it: 100,000 men gave their lives to erect it.

To Pharaoh, the men who slaved to their death in this mammoth monstrosity, were only chattel. To God, they were men with immortal souls.

The fatal folly of the communistic scourge can be clearly detected in the light of this timeless truth. Communism robs the individual of his dignity, his freedom to think, to speak, to choose, to ask questions, to disagree.

The individual does not exist for his personal good, but for the welfare of the state. In the system of communism, the individual is a link in a chain, a comrade in the party, a number in the masses; but in the kingdom of God, every man is a king, a son of royalty, an heir to a kingdom, a child of destiny, a part of the ages.

At the time of our text, Israel was in a state of National stress and utter moral chaos. But at this junction comes the impassioned plea of Almighty God above the clamor of the irresponsible crowd. "GO SEARCH FOR A MAN."

There is an element of great haste in this divine commission. As always in the business of finding, saving, and making a life, we are in a race with time.

The nature of this plea is indicative of the extremity of the National crisis. The death rattle is in the throat of the nation. Israel is like a doomed man walking the last, lonely steps to the scaffold. There is no other alternative for the salvation of a nation but to find a man. Delay would be fatal; neglect would mean death.

Just a name would not do; just one of the masses would not suffice. He must be a certain kind. He must be a man whose life God had touched, who became aware of his divinely commissioned task.

"Search for a man who executeth judgment

and seeketh the truth." Here is God's description of true manhood. The true man is he to whom truth is the all-important thing. The habit of his mind, the purpose of his life, is to seek for truth and execute what is right and in the will of God.

This man not only seeks truth, but when he finds what professes to be truth, he weighs and evaluates it in the light of God's Truth, and will, and gives his judgment without fear or favor.

If you find a man of this high and noble caliber, He says, "I will pardon the iniquity of the nation."

This is symbolic of a hundred like cases. When Abraham prayed for Sodom the conditions of averting judgment were to find ten righteous persons. Running this theory to its final application, I believe God would have spared the city for one man's sake.

Standing amid the utter chaos and corruption of the Antediluvian world, righteous Noah held back the flood waters of doom for over 100 years to build an ark and save his household.

Life finds its moral meaning at the point of the individual. The plan for every cathedral—the plot for every drama—the design for every work of art, had its inception in the burning heart of an individual.

At the highest peak of human achievement stands the individual with God, on a mountain peak apart, silhouetted against the sky.

There was the mighty lawgiver, Moses, born to a slave woman, found adrift on the Nile, adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, raised by a hired servant, given a name signifying his irregular discovery. Absorbed into a pagan society, lost in the universities of Egypt, forgotten by the Goshen brick makers, erased from the annals of Jewish history. But NO!! The record has it that it came

into his heart to visit his people. From that hour on Moses became an individual, a soul with a calling, a being with a purpose, a man with a destiny.

And since that far-off day the generations have not been able to forget him.

The silent sphinx could not hold his secret, the deserts of Midian could not envelop him, the waters of the Red Sea could not drown him, the passing ages could not efface his splendor. He belonged to Egypt for a while but since he came to grips with Deity he now belongs to the ages.

Every great invention of Science, every priceless painting, every classic writing bears the imprint of an individual's name.

God himself explored the depths and scaled the heights of divine achievement when He chose to save the world with one man.

It was not an army that did it. It was not a host of angels that wrought it. It was not a band of seraphic creatures. It was a man, one man, one individual man who reconciled a world to God.

It was one individual who was with the wild beasts in forty days of temptation. It was one man who prayed alone in Gethsemane till He was emersed in a bloody sweat. It was one man who was to die for the people. It was one man who bore the sins of the world. It was one man who made a final offering for sin. It was this man who marked every individual of earth with special significance and importance, and gives to every man a vital role in the drama of death.

Out from college halls have gone uncounted throngs of students. Some have blazed a trail across this world that time will never erase. Some have dropped out of sight, disappeared over the horizon and have never been heard of since. They

became lost in the crowd, crushed by the pressure in critical days, or forgotten in the monotony of peaceful times.

You too must take your place in a complex society. There will be no place prepared for you. But if you have your life touched and tuned with fingers of a noble purpose you will find a place or God will make one for you that you might make your contribution to the world.

You will find but one point of complete safety and happiness and that is in the will of God.

If I had one suggestion to offer you for a full and useful life, I would tell you to be prepared for any eventuality and whatever you are prepared to do God will see that you have the opportunity to do it.

In this day when error and false religions and false doctrines are thriving so mightily, it will take special personal piety and integrity to stand for truth and right. To do this there are times when you will have to stand alone, live apart, to feel that you are the most solitary creature on God's earth.

We have seen the tides of change and uncertainty ebb and flow and at intervals through the years the tidal waves of jabbering little men like the blundering babel builders have screamed their defiance and bellowed out their poisonous propaganda. But the Titan has stood and will stand as a symbol of courage as long as men love truth and seek the councils of the wise.

Out there tomorrow you will find yourselves in a confused society. Don't get lost. Don't lose your bearing. You are an individual, an individual that God can use.

Remember the world is in a state of moral decay, "Ye are the salt of the earth."

The world is in gross error, You have the torch of truth.

The world is in the prison chains of sin: You have the keys to the kingdom.

The world is dying: You have the message of life.

The world is doomed to despair, You have the kingly orders of release.

To be thus endowed and fail to give your all to sweeten the bitter life stream of humanity is a moral crime that beggars all description.